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AUTHOR	Hackney, Catherine Eggleston
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of organizational culture on women's professional lives. It focuses on women in entry-level positions in educational administration and explores the interaction of organizational attitudes and expectations with the participants' personalities, epistemological positions, work needs, performance self-esteem, and sense of self-empowerment. The 24 participants for the study were selected from 135 women enrolled in the educational-administration leadership-preparation programs at a large, Southeastern university. Each woman was given a semi-structured ethnographic interview through which the events, beliefs, attitudes, and policies that had shaped and were shaping her professional life were explored. Guiding questions included "Are the organization's beliefs, attitudes, and role expectations in conflict or in congruence with these women's personalities, epistemological positions, and work needs?" and "Do these women feel a sense of power over their own careers or do they feel that others in the organization control what will happen to them professionally?" The results show that the nature of the organization can influence the relationship between the individual's psychosocial needs, her performance self-esteem, and the sociocultural context of the organization. The congruence between the individual's needs and the goals of the organization promotes not only psychological well-being, but greater attainment of organizational goals. (Contains 23 references.) (RJM)

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Voices of Women at Entry Level Positions of Educational Administration

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Catherine Eggleston Hackney, Ph.D.

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If women are to stand on equal professional footing with males in educational administration, a new organizational paradigm must emerge. Alternative voices, experiences, backgrounds, and histories must be acknowledged as valid. Each and every individual must be considered valuable to the organization. Compassion, respect, generosity, and connectedness must be the norm.

When Title VII of the Educational Amendments of Public Law 92-318 was passed by Congress in 1972, women applauded it as a definitive step toward removing sexual discrimination in all federal assistance programs and activities. The passing of the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, in 1974, amended the law to further its coverage to employees in educational institutions. These pieces of legislation became milestones in the growing movement for women's rights in education and the workplace (Random & Strasburg, 1982). So, as the decade of the seventies ushered in growing awareness and sensitivity to issues affecting women, this legislation gave women the hope for equal treatment and opportunity under the law. Progress was made; women were entering fields which had historically been closed to them; women were enjoying greater choice in determining the directions their lives would take; women were in greater control of their minds, their bodies, and their lifestyles. But, as the decade began to wane and the political climate began to shift toward the right, the political activism which had spurred the feminist movement quieted into a false complacency.

Moreover, societal constructions of perceived gender differences biased the treatment of women in the educational setting. Though empirically not real, these differences have accounted for exclusion in language, symbols, culture and practice (Amey & Twombly, 1991). Though society seeks to determine why schools are failing to produce self-sufficient, productive young adults and failing to be held in respect by the community at large, it continues to hold on to the norms, values, and beliefs that have governed our schools since the turn of the century. At the time when our nation's educational system needs people of high ability and high motivation, it continues to minimizes the contributions of women and advances disproportionately small numbers of women to administrative positions. Though promotion and hiring practices of women in school administration have gradually loosened so that more women hold positions

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at higher levels of power and decision-making, the field remains predominantly male. Policy makers have not adequately altered the organizational structures to incorporate the feminine leadership disposition; the hierarchy is continually reinforced, and the structures which keep women in lower level administrative and staff positions are preserved.

Why are proportionately so few women in positions to make policy, identify needs and values and set priorities for education? Why, with the dramatic increase in the number of doctoral degrees held by women and the added expertise of women in educational administration, do so many women achieve only lower level positions in school administration? Why is the research about women as excellent educational leaders held in such little regard by educational organizations?

This study has generated theory concerning the organizational culture and how it is perceived by women who have historically been marginalized from power. It also has examined the organization's impact on the women's aspirations and advancement into higher-level administrative positions. By listening to the voices of the women of this study, educational policy makers can identify the subtle messages that exist in the organization which influence an employee's development and performance-self-esteem.

Women's Development and the Organizational Culture

Many have sought to explain why so few women are represented in the higher levels of school administration. It seems obvious that the organizational culture profoundly affects the individual's sense of self and in turn the individual affects the nature of the organizational culture. Yet, changing the status quo, altering attitudes, and shaping the behaviors of individuals present obstacles which may at times be insurmountable. Because the present cultural reality reinforces the notion that acknowledging and accepting the voices and values of others represent the loss and surrender of power, for change to be realized organizations of the future must be forged in an alternative paradigm.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) were interested in what women themselves had to say about their own development. Their *Women's Ways of Knowing* research (1986) identified five stages of epistemological development women transcend as they mature, gain life experience, develop "voice," self-confidence, and self-esteem. The stages of silence, received knowing, subjective knowing, procedural knowing, and constructed knowing represent women's accounts of their own personal change and growth. Belenky et al. (1986) characterized their five stages in the following ways: silence at which women are not-knowing, voiceless, and powerless; received knowing at which women find knowledge and authority external to themselves and within powerful others from whom one is expected to learn; subjective knowing at which knowing is personal, private, and based on intuition and feeling rather than on rational thought; procedural knowing at which techniques and procedures for acquiring and evaluating knowledge, that can be separate (marked by skepticism and reasoning against) or connected (marked by understanding and reasoning with), are developed and practiced; and, connected knowing at which truth is contextual, knowledge is not absolute, and the self is central to the knowing process.

Perceived as both catalytic for change and impedimental to growth, these accounts were reflective of their moral dilemmas and decisions, their education and learning, their relationships of importance, and their own self-images . Though results of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) research were originally directed to the academic setting, they can be easily applied to the organizational culture, which Graves (1986) referred to as the "glue that holds organizations together" and a means by which they communicate and coordinate their efforts, a "ring fence" separating insiders from outsiders.

Schein's "learning culture" (1992) was characterized by a faith in people and an assumption that human

nature was basically good and mutable. A complex blend of individualism and groupism promoted diversity as desirable at the individual and subgroup level; subgroups were valued as resources for learning and innovation. Tasks and relationships were considered equally important. The prevailing logic of the organization was non-linear, reflecting the complexity of the world as well as the difficulty with prediction and analysis. Finally, information and communication were central to the organization's well-being. The goal of communication was to connect everyone in the organization to everyone else. A high degree of trust, value in truth and belief in others' constructiveness of intent was integral to the philosophy of communication within the organization.

It appears that Schein's "learning culture" was similar to the one advocated by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986). They suggested a culture based on connectedness among participants, where alienation, repression, and division are replaced with community, integrity, and power and where both minds and spirits are developed. Members of the organization would feel an obligation to one another as individuals and colleagues. Shared values drive members to listen, accept and appreciate the contributions of all members as equals. The organization would be more respectful of authentic voice, that which is original and meaningful, rather than that which is produced in an effort to please and conform.

The Study

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989) human behavior can not be understood without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thinking, feelings, and actions. Qualitative methods enable the researcher to understand, from the perspective of the participants, the complexity of their situations as well as the process and meaning of the events of their professional lives. They stress the importance of setting, context, and the subject's own frame of reference and permit the emergence of constructs which contribute to theory generation. Moreover, because educational policy-makers have not adequately altered organizational structure to incorporate the feminine voice, it was imperative to us that the voices of the marginalized, in this instance our participants, be heard through the study.

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture as it affected the professional lives of these women at entry levels of educational administration. Particularly, the researcher was interested in the interaction of organizational attitudes and expectations with the participants' personalities, epistemological positions, work needs, performance-self-esteem, and sense of power over their own professional lives.

Participants

The participants of this study were selected from 135 women enrolled in the educational administration leadership preparation programs at a large, southeastern university. The researcher first invited these women to participate in an earlier study which examined the relationship between their stages of epistemological position, determined by the results of the interview protocol developed by Belenky et al. (1986) and their performance-self-esteem, according to the Stakes scale (1979). Sixty-seven women responded to this invitation and of these, the researcher and her assistants interviewed 24 women. The results of this earlier study are presented as archival data in this study.

For the final stage of the study the researchers selected 10 of these 24 women to participate in the last rounds of interviews. They represented the subculture of women who held positions at the entry levels of educational administration, but performed their duties at varied sites and districts in a metropolitan area

served by the university at which they were enrolled. This particular subculture was chosen because, though conspicuous in the school district, and considered administrative by position, they were, in the traditional sense, without meaningful power. That is, they were on lower rungs of the hierarchical ladder of the bureaucracies of which they were a part and were not included in decisions which affected policy development. This sample selection, which represented 10 different sites and several different positions, permitted a wider variation among the participants and encouraged later transferability of the findings, as recommended by Dobbert (1982).

The Women of the Study

Sally was a women in her 40s who had served as a high school assistant principal for seven years. She was working on her Educational Specialist degree in educational administration and supervision. Sally was responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating curriculum revision in her building. She also was responsible for staff development, assisting teachers with instruction, enforcing the school discipline plan and the teacher performance appraisal system. Sally was active in her state and local administrative leadership organization and aspired to the high school principalship. Sally felt she had to "do all the things you need to do to prepare yourself for what may be coming." Sally was determined to be a procedural/constructed knower according to the results of the epistemological position interview conducted earlier and considered as archival data in this study.

Gloria was coordinator of a specialized curriculum area in a large consolidated county school district. For nine years she had been responsible for curriculum revision and staff development. She was a woman in her late 40s, a highly constructed knower based on the epistemological interview, who was working on her doctoral degree in educational administration. Gloria was a "negative instance" of the study; she was not actively seeking another position and did not aspire to a higher level of administration. Gloria wanted to "stay close to the kids" and wondered why she would want a job were she "didn't have the latitude" to use her "talents and strengths creatively to work with other people."

Helen was a middle school assistant principal. In her 30s, she aspired to the principalship after three years in her present position. Helen felt her time was consumed with clerical work and was disillusioned that she had to "pinch out" time for curriculum issues. She described her position as "one step away from the principal, one step away from the custodian." Helen felt "pigeon holed in the building" by a principal who granted her little release time to participate in district activities. She made an effort to attend after hours conferences, workshops, and get-togethers to try to keep her "face out there." Helen was a doctoral student in educational administration who was determined by the epistemological interview to be a constructed knower.

Barbara was a special area curriculum supervisor for a large county school district. In her late 40s, Barbara stayed home for 13 years to raise her family. Pressured by her age and time, she was actively and visibly seeking promotion and aspired to the superintendency. Restricted by the layers of hierarchy, Barbara said:

> " I am on the ladder, planning, taking advantage of broadening myself in everything I do. Every time I have an opportunity to accept responsibility I mentally check quickly to see how this will assist me moving up through the organization."

Based on the results of the epistemological position interview, Barbara appeared to be a subjective

knower.

Bev was a doctoral student who had just been promoted to a high school assistant principal. Bev aspired to the principalship, but felt that she had to "work twice as hard and be twice as good" as a male to move to the same point. She felt that she didn't know how to "work the organization" which might explain why she held a teaching position for 17 years before moving into administration. Bev aspired to become a curriculum director and attempted to find ways by which she was not " bragging" but was "out front" with what she was accomplishing. When first interviewed to determine epistemological position, Bev was still a classroom teacher and was determined to be a highly constructed knower.

Linda had been a junior high school assistant principal for three years at the time of this study. In her mid thirties, she had spent 14 years in the classroom and was enrolled in an educational specialist leadership program. Though Linda aspired to the superintendency, she did not rule out the possibility of leaving the profession for the state legislature. Linda was "aligning" herself with "creative problem-solvers who have vision." She felt she had begun to "open up" her mind to the fact that is "capable of doing things" within and outside of the profession. Linda was a procedural knower as determined by the epistemological interview.

Along with Gloria, Ruth was also a "negative instance" in this study. According to the epistemological interview a highly constructed knower and in her 40s, Ruth was a curriculum coordinator of a large county district who was responsible for curriculum, staff development, co-curricular activities, and textbook adoption. She had direct supervision over instruction in her academic area at 2 high schools and a junior high school. Ruth felt she was in a "powerless position" but continued to "nudge the program along with new and different things." She knew the importance of staying literate and bringing new ideas to teachers. Early in her career she said she "stopped working for the district and started working for students." Ruth did not aspire to higher levels of administration:

> "If I'm good enough, if I'm competent, I'll move up if the job is right for me. I would worry very much about a job I got through political means because I'd have to hold on to it through political means."

Holly was an "acting" central office administrator who was in her early 50s and a doctoral student. Her professional responsibilities included coordinating state standards, accreditation, and staff development. She spent 10 years in the classroom and had been a principal in a parochial school. Holly dealt with a "hindering home situation" where she had to "squeeze things in" around her "spouse's very active professional and social schedule." Though Holly could see herself in the superintendency, she felt that transcending the levels dictated by the hierarchy were prohibitive. She also felt that her chances of attaining a superintendency were slim given that fact that she was "an outsider" to the region. The researcher and her assistants determined Holly to be a subjective knower according to the results of the epistemological interview.

Susan was an assistant principal in a large urban high school after 22 years as a classroom teacher. In her late 40s and a received knower, she had served in that capacity for six years and described her career as "marked with the pursuit of knowledge and skills in instructional and curricular development" to enable her to be a "more effective, productive educator and leader." Supported by her performance evaluations and her superior's encouragement, Susan had applied for the "lead assistant" position at her school. She was denied the position which was awarded to a person who had not made the contributions to the

organization that she had. She felt that because she was not included in the "in group" it "does not matter" what she does. She also felt that "decisions are not based on what's good for children." Despite the disappointment, demoralization, and resentment, Susan continued to do what she does best, being "there" for children. Susan planned to complete her doctorate in educational administration and seek a higher level position elsewhere. She also entertained the idea of teaching at the post-secondary level. Susan was a received knower, based on the results of the epistemological position interview.

For the past six years Gail served as the instructional coordinator in her elementary school. Her duties centered around working with teachers for instructional improvement. Gail also coordinated staff development activities in her school. Before this position Gail was a classroom teacher for 12 years. Gail felt that it was her responsibility to "support children first...because we are in the business of working with children." Gail continued to aspire to the principalship, the position for which she had applied and been denied twice. Discouraged by favoritism in her district, illustrated by the high school coach who was awarded an elementary principalship, Gail has begun to "rethink" whether her system is the one with which she wants to continue working to achieve her career aspirations. Gail was a procedural/constructed knower, determined by the epistemological interview.

Research Strategies

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), the purposeful selection of research strategies must satisfy three considerations: provision for adequate data and information, the efficient use of time, access and cost, and the respect for participant privacy by avoiding disruption of the everyday world.

In this study, the researcher elected to do semi-structured ethnographic interviews through which the events, beliefs, attitudes, and policies which had shaped and were shaping the phenomenon under study were explored. The data collected through these interviews were triangulated with the results of the earlier conducted epistemological position interview, the scores on the Stakes' Performance-Self-Esteem Scale (PSES), and copies of the participants' job descriptions, performance reviews, and resumes.

Ethnographic interview questions were designed to probe into the participants' perceptions of the organizational culture in terms of personality-organizational congruence, organizational attitudes toward aspiring women, the participants' feelings of performance-self-esteem, compromises necessary for success, power, organizational control, inclusion, exclusion, equity, and discrimination. The following research questions served as the basis for analysis:

1. Are the organization's beliefs, attitudes, and role expectations in conflict or in congruence with these women's personalities, epistemological positions, and work needs?

2. Does the organization's perceived attitude toward the participants, as women aspiring to higher levels of administration, affect their feelings of performance-self-esteem and ability to advance?

3. Are the participants able to be "themselves" or do they perceive that they need to compromise their own beliefs to be more attractive to the organization and advance their careers?

4. Do these women feel a sense of power over their own careers or do they feel that others in

the organization control what will happen to them professionally?

5. To what degree do these women perceive the organization as inclusive and equity-conscious or exclusive and discriminatory?

Data Collection

Data collected through the structured epistemological interviews, the less structured ethnographic interviews, the self-evaluative PSES, and the examination of artifacts offered more than one lens by which to examine the issues of the study. The researcher asked each participant to complete the Stakes' Performance-Self-Esteem self-evaluative scale (PSES) before her first interview. This scale was designed to measure the performance-self-esteem, a separate and distinct factor of self-esteem, of any person. The 47 item scale included characteristics which related to ability and performance and which were scored separately from the social self esteem items which were also part of the instrument.

The first interview used was the *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) structured interview to determine through etic analysis the participant's epistemological positions. Questions were centered around issues of self-image, relationships of importance, education and learning, real-life decision-making, accounts of personal changes and growth, perceived catalysts for change and impediments to growth, and visions of the future. Embedded in the interview were questions which were devised for assigning Perry's (1970) epistemological positions as well as standard questions developed by Gilligan (1982) and Kohlberg (1984).

The researcher conducted the second interview, the ethnographic interview, with participants to attempt to discover their perceptions of the organizational culture of which they were a part. Questions were formulated to probe into the areas of performance-self-esteem, epistemological position, and perceptions of the organization. The nine basic questions were supplemented with particular questions for each woman designed to further explore and clarify data collected with the PSES and epistemological interview. The second interview protocol is available from the researcher.

The researcher also interviewed two "outside others," a superintendent and an associate superintendent, to verify the data collected from the participants. The researcher also conducted a participants' focus group in the final stages of the study to share the collective data, ask for verification, discuss tentative explanations, and note any discrepancies or negative instances. The focus group afforded the participants another opportunity to become engaged as co-researchers and assurde accuracy and truthfulness, and transferability.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected with the ethnographic interview, the focus group, the interviews of "outside others," the field notes, and the artifacts, the Strauss and Corbin (1990) model for coding data in stages was utilized. During open coding, each data unit was analyzed for evidence of the five categories designated to organize the data: Types of Roles, Aspirations, What It Takes to Be Successful, Roadblocks, Getting Around Roadblocks, and Catalysts. The axial coding stage of data analysis followed and resulted in subcategories which were used to reassemble the data in new ways. The final stage of data analysis, selective coding, permitted the linking of the earlier determined categories to create stories of causal conditions, antecedents, contextual conditions, strategies, and consequences for action-oriented construction of grounded theory. This stage occurred after all the data had been collected and analyzed through the axial stage and had been verified by the "outside others" and the participants during the focus

group.

Soundness of the Study

Though qualitative analysis searches for common patterns, themes, and categories in the data, the researcher was also aware of "outliers" or negative instances. Furthermore, to ensure credibility, dependability, and transferability, the researcher audio-taped interviews, recorded field notes, kept a researcher's diary and used the earlier described system for analysis of the data. The researcher also engaged an outside "research partner" when there were questions during the open and axial stages of data analysis. The additional data collected from the "outside others" interviews checked for match or mismatch of the data retrieved from the participants.

This research was intended not only to examine the perceptions of this particular sample, but also to be of value to other individuals in similar situations. The selection of the multi participants from a number of different districts and sites and the triangulation of the data expanded the study's transferability to other settings, organizations, and professions. An audit trail consisting of the audio-tapes, field notes, researcher's diary, and a portfolio for each participant has preserved the data in an understandable and retrievable form.

Perceptions of the Organization

The women of this study discussed their perceptions of the organization through three major themes which emerged from the data analysis: *validation, inclusion,* and *authenticity*. When present, these conditions were found to nurture the individual's professional and personal development, contribute to feelings of community, encourage aspiration toward higher level position, and generally promote positive feelings toward the organization.

When the women of the study spoke of *validation*, they referred to their perception of the organization's recognition of their importance. Organizations which acknowledged hard work, expertise, and efforts beyond the expected with verbal praise, opportunities for more responsibility and authority, autonomy, and promotion were perceived more favorably. As Gloria noted, when organizations "used people's good ideas to grow," individuals felt valued and important. Conversely, when *validation* was not present in the organization, the women participants told of experiencing frustration and feeling, as Ruth noted, that they "had more to give than the organization allowed." They expressed feelings of ineffectiveness, isolation, being stifled and held back. Such conditions were said to "eat away" at self-confidence and self-esteem as individuals struggled to feel good about themselves in such work situations.

Susan, whose feelings were very strong, was the one negative instance whose sense of self was severely impaired an absence of *validation*. When asked about what the organization might think of her as an aspiring woman, she replied, "I don't think they think about me. Period." She felt her instincts were stifled all the time by what she was asked to do in her position. She expressed feelings of self-doubt and said, "I don't think about changing things anymore. I've become tired." She went on to say that perhaps those making promotion decisions were right, maybe she couldn't handle a principalship.

The second theme that emerged was the presence or absence of *inclusion* within the organization. *Inclusion* referred to the individual's perception of belonging to the organization, the sense of involvement in decision-making and planning, and the ability to communicate and share information with persons at all levels of the organization. Organizations that promoted "teaming," collegial work relationships, and "the omission of condescending attitudes of those at higher ranks," encouraged participatory management,

invited more than an elite group into the "inner circle," and created an egalitarian environment were perceived more positively than those that were more traditional in nature. Participants, especially Susan and Ruth, spoke disfavorably of organizations that exercised unilateral decision-making, created an "in group" and an "out group," and maintained a tight hierarchical structure. Susan spoke of her new job description as designed by a new superintendent to "decrease power, limit responsibility, and exclude individuals from the inner circle."

The third theme that emerged from the findings was *authenticity* as an organizational characteristic. The participants spoke of *authenticity* as the organization's practicing what it professed to believe. When present, *authenticity* was demonstrated by Linda's reference to "visionary leadership" at the superintendent's level, clarity of organizational expectations, decision-making in the best interest of children, promotion based on meritocracy, and assignment of positions based on experience and expertise, as was most especially noted in Gail's interview. All of the women of the study also felt that an authentic organization communicated clearly its expectation, developed leadership formally and informally, and recognized the need to care for its members as whole persons. Within the work situations perceived as authentic, these women shared a faith that their hard work, performance, and expertise would be rewarded; they felt "underwritten" in their positions and received organizational support in their quest for higher levels of administration.

When *authenticity* was absent in an organization the women of the study cited examples of weak, directionless leadership and politically-influenced decision-making. Gloria said of her district that it was "not on any path to glory." They also spoke of the promotion of less than qualified persons as pay-offs for political favors, ambiguous organizational expectations, and an organizational view "that an individual's need for time away and rest was a sign of weakness" (Ruth). In the absence of *authenticity*, participants were discouraged and disillusioned. They saw their efforts as having little effect in terms of career advancement.

The organization's inability or unwillingness to sponsor leadership development programs, to clarify and communicate expectations for those new to a job, and to provide incentive for mentoring and coaching indicated to these women that the organization did not support that which it professed to be important and valuable, effective leadership. They also felt that hard work, performance, and expertise was not always rewarded. Often promotions were not based on meritocracy but on political alliances. And, while their performance review and verbal remarks from supervisors recognized their contributions to the organization, they saw others, less able and experienced, offered positions at higher levels of administration.

Though feelings of *validation, inclusion, and authenticity* were appreciated and valued by these women, and though they affected their feelings of well-being about the organization, they did not always dictate the quality of work and feelings of professionalism these women held within themselves. As Gail put it:

> I'm not looking for it (recognition) and I'm not counting on it. I feel that I am a professional woman not because of the recognition others might give me, but because of what I've been able to do- receive my education, my position. That's where I feel professional.

And, as Gloria summarized:

> I don't need a cheering section to feel good about what I do...It's like whipped cream on top. It's nice to have but I don't need 'their' approval to know I do good work.

According to their own perceptions, these women's sense of self and quality of performance did not seem to be affected by organizational attention to validation, inclusion, and authenticity. What does seem to be affected by these factors is these women's attitudes toward their work environment and the degree of "match" they feel with the organization and its expectations.

Dealing with the Organization

The second set of themes that emerged from the study was based on data collected in the open coding categories. The four themes, which suggested ways that these women have dealt with conditions present in the organization in their pursuit of higher level positions, include *Internal Standard/Strengths/Beliefs, Sense of Mission, Making Inroads into the* Organization, and *Proactive Preparation of Self.*

Dominant among the women of this study was their *strong sense of self*: "Who I am and what I am about." Their belief in the value of their work, their importance to children, and their worth as educators and members of the organization helped them to overcome the often inauthentic, non-validating and exclusive conditions in their work situations. Time after time, the researcher heard that though support and encouragement were appreciated, they did not need them to know they were doing a worthy job. They placed value on their own beliefs, respected hard work, effective performance, knowledge, expertise, and above all, integrity.

The second theme of this set was the participants' *sense of mission*. They believed, without exception, that they were doing what they were, and enduring what they must, for the benefit of children. In several cases, these women felt they would not stay in their present positions if it were not for children. When they saw in the children the results of their work, they felt it was, as Susan noted, "all worth doing." And, as Bev said, "Some days I ask: Am I making any difference at all? Yes, you make a difference to the children..."

They expressed disgust for administrative decisions which were made for reasons other than the children's best interests. They were centered on the instructional program and protected it from encroachment. They envisioned that the superintendent's position should be one of highest instructional leadership. Barbara expressed this action as "the superintendent having her finger on the pulse of what's happening in every classroom." These women seemed to be on a crusade for what was educationally right for children, striving to demonstrate it in practice each day. They needed to feel that their work was meaningful and purposeful and sought to ensure that this to be so. Helen felt that given the opportunity she could "turn this school upside-down," leading the school organization toward a vision for the benefit of children.

The third theme that emerged in this set is referred to as *Inroads into the* Organization. Because the traditional paths to career advancement continue to be difficult for women to pursue, the women of this study spoke of other politically savvy measures they have taken. Because so many organizations still view women as deficient in terms of the more traditional male model of leadership, the participants felt the need "to work twice as hard and be twice as good" as their male counterparts (Bev). Several of the participants told stories of doing much beyond expectations so that superiors would think they were capable of higher levels of administration. The need to prove themselves was a dominant motivation as they took on extra tasks and responsibilities beyond those which they had been assigned.

As Linda remarked, they were conscious of "aligning themselves with other bright, creative people." They

networked with those they respected at higher levels of administration. They realized that it is often who you know and who knows you that affords individuals the opportunity for career advancement. They also felt the need to communicate their effectiveness with others both in and out of the organization and accepted invitations to speak with schools, cabinets, community groups, and other professional organizations. And, though they expressed little respect for a system which would permit others to attain their positions politically, they realized the need to demonstrate their abilities and achievements to those powers responsible for personnel decisions.

The last theme centered around these individuals' *proactive preparation* for future positions. As Sally explained, "You try to do all the things you need to do to prepare yourself for what will be coming." This preparation took on several forms as the participants discussed it. Women have not had great success following the traditional paths to positions at higher levels of administration. Consequently, these women saw the need to take alternative routes, to become known for a particular area of expertise, a niche of knowledge, or the ability to do something that others can not. They realized that the hierarchy in large systems often is prohibitive to women seeking cabinet level positions. Rather than being totally discouraged by that condition, they were developing and polishing their skills in instructional and curricular areas to become marketable to smaller systems which might need and appreciate those areas of expertise.

The participants also were pursuing experiences that would broaden their administrative backgrounds. Barbara consciously chose to pursue those opportunities which might better prepare her for career advancement. Helen, deprived of the leadership opportunities which would prepare her for a principalship, created her own, playing a game with herself, reflecting on how she, if she were principal, would handle situations, and make decisions as they would arise in her building. Bev, through regular discussions sought the advice and input of her principal regarding the decisions she makes on her job.

All of the women in the study acknowledged the need for advanced degrees. To be considered for a position for which a male might need only a master's degree, they recognized that they would probably need a doctorate. All were enrolled in either a specialist's or doctoral program at the time of the study. They also regularly participated in local, state, and national conferences and seminars for professional development.

Discussion

As Getzels and Guba (1957) have written, organizations are social systems in which external and internal conditions determine organizational expectations. These expectations, in turn, interact with personalities and work needs to produce individuals' positive or negative orientations to the organization. The results of this research have suggested this to be true with this group of participants.

The discussion of the results of the study illustrate the complexity of the interaction of epistemological position, performance-self-esteem, and perceptions of the organizational culture. As Cropanzano, James, and Cetera (1992) wrote, the interaction between the individual and the organization precipitates a positive or negative orientation to the organization, which translates into positive or negative self-esteem and work attitude. As found in this particular study, and as Triandis (1989) theorized, the nature of the organization can influence the relationship between the individual's psycho-social needs, her performance-self-esteem, and the socio-cultural context of the organization. And, most importantly, as posited by Bandura (1986), the congruence between the individual's needs and the goals of the organization promotes not only psychological well-being but greater attainment of organizational goals.

Personality Needs and Performance Self-Esteem

The data collected in this study have suggested that when individuals' needs for validation, inclusion, and authenticity were met by the organization, it was reflected in the participants' expressions of performance-self-esteem and in higher (above the mean) scores on the Performance-Self-Esteem Scale (PSES). The opposite was found to be true as well. Organizational absence of perceived validation, inclusion, and authenticity was reflected in responses to interview questions and lower (below the mean) scores on the PSES which indicated lower performance-self-esteem.

When the women of the study spoke of feeling valued by the organization, being recognized for their performance, experiencing opportunities for leadership development, and seeing their ideas used, they communicated a positive orientation toward the organization. Moreover, they exhibited stronger attitudes about their ability to not only do their own jobs but to aspire to higher levels of administration. The validation they felt from the organization was nurturing not only to their sense of self but also to their perceived ability to be successful in the organization.

The women of the study also spoke of issues of inclusion and exclusion. Feeling as though they belonged to the organization, feeling invited and welcome, and being included in planning and decision-making contributed to a positive orientation to the organization and higher sense of performance-self-esteem. The presence of "in" groups and "out" groups were debilitating to the participants. They were disillusioned with the political nature of their organizations and wondered whether their efforts and ideas made any difference at all to those in power.

Perceptions of the authenticity of the organization also triggered positive and negative orientations and levels of performance-self-esteem. In many instances, the women were disillusioned with the organization which failed to practice what it professed to believe, and for political reasons, promoted less than qualified individuals to higher level administrative positions. Such organizational conditions led to a range of negative feelings from disappointment to anger. Conversely, however, when personnel practices were congruent with the organization's espoused beliefs, these women felt valued for their contributions and hopeful about being rewarded for their work efforts.

Leadership Emergence

Though these findings can inform organizations about how they might address conditions which precipitate negative work attitudes, they also reveal the real loss when potential leadership ability is underdeveloped. According to Stakes (1979) if one's sense of performance-self-esteem is high, one behaves as a leader would and is often chosen by the organization as a leader. Andrews (1984) found that participants in a study who scored highest on the PSES were more likely to be chosen by the group as a leader. Perception of leadership emergence was influenced by observation of key variables: assertiveness, confidence, enjoyment of a challenge, persuasiveness, and intelligence. Thus, when performance-self-esteem is high, it is likely that an individual will behave more like a leader and be chosen by the group as a leader. If self-esteem is indirectly influenced by the group, there exist opportunities for the organization as a mediating force in creation of an environment where self-esteem can flourish.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) reiterated and expanded upon these leadership traits when they wrote about women at the constructed level of epistemological development. They described the constructed knower as one who has embraced humankind with responsibility and acceptance, and who has balanced the voice of reason with the heart and soul of intuition. Their constructed knower is one who

realizes the complexity of the world and its problems and recognizes the need for interdependence with others. She is self-assured, yet humble, is grounded in the present, yet possesses a vision for the future.

Possessing such a world view, the constructed knowers of the study, with the exception of Bev, exhibited PSES scores below the mean. (Interestingly, Bev's PSES was first recorded while she was still a classroom teacher anticipating promotion to the assistant principalship and before she was actually working in the administrative world.) This might be explained by the fact that as a woman transcends the levels of the epistemological hierarchy to the level of constructed knowing she gains a stronger sense of self, a more articulate voice, and greater power. Yet, what contributes to this development is her ability to analyze, question, respect the views of others, and even debate her own thinking. Her truths become less definitive, ambiguity is more easily tolerated, external and internal integration becomes more complete. The resulting humility, which is characteristic of a constructed knower may cause her to doubt her own thinking, to assess situations conditionally, and to develop a voice to communicate and convince others of life's complexities. This often is not tolerated without conflict in the traditional organizationwhere success is measured by compliance with the ideas of the power holders.

Organizational Expectations

The traits of the constructed knower, though unquestionably desirable for collaboration, participatory decision-making, and leadership development, often are not valued in women aspiring toward higher levels of school administration. This may be explained by examining the nature of the traditional educational organization. The traditional organizational environment and culture often expect individuals to be "receivers" of male role authority. As noted by participants of this study, women often feel that their thinking is trivialized, not respected, and not validated by the organization. And though aspiring women often exhibit the leadership ability to obtain an entry or staff level position, they later encounter a culture which, intentionally or not, stifles them, holds them back, and sometimes requires them "to put a leash on" themselves to survive.

In such an organizational culture, where knowledge and truth are authority-centered and the expectation is that individuals in lower level positions function in a received mode, the constructed knower experiences dissonance, frustration, disillusionment, and lower (below the mean in this study) performance-self-esteem. To produce more positive feelings toward the organization and better attitudes toward work, the more highly evolved knower would flourish in a more egalitarian culture, one characterized by teaming and collaboration, an organizational structure of "webs and nets" as opposed to the traditional "pyramids and hierarchies" (Amey and Twombly, 1992, p.144).

Orientation toward the Organization

As this study and earlier research determined, such egalitarian cultures do not exist in abundance. Time and again, the participants of this study provided situational examples of that fact. Yet, in most cases, they were able to deal with less than desirable organizational culture, maintain performance effectiveness, and sustain their strong internal standards and belief systems.

Marshall (1985) wrote of the dilemmas women face as they encounter uninviting cultures in their professional experiences. She theorized that women take one of three paths in their careers. They become satisfied with staff level positions and retreat from the higher level administrative arena. They give up aspirations of power and leadership and return to classroom teaching. Or, they achieve by "passing:" they find a balance between their feminine and professional identities, buy into the "female as deficient" notion, work harder, and play games to achieve. The attitudes and organizational orientations of the

participants of this study were reflective of Marshall's premise.

Two of the participants, Ruth and Gloria, fit Marshall's (1985) first category. They are content to remain in staff level positions for two reasons, their sense of mission and the unattractiveness of general administration. They love their curricular areas, working with teachers, and staying close to children. They feel individuals at the higher levels of administration are too removed from the business of schooling, have little opportunity to use their creative talents, and must engage in distractive political games to succeed. Both women have rejected the traditional notion of power. They consciously have decided to remain where they are. With such a decision they feel they are better able to make worthwhile contributions and have greater influence.

Unfortunately, the absence of these bright, committed women in higher administration creates a loss to the organization and to children. These women's alternative voices will not be heard in the traditional positions of power where they might have made a noticeable difference in the educational program for all children. Too, their perspectives will be denied to a culture in need of change.

Marshall's (1985) second category, that of giving up aspirations of leadership, explains another participant's, Susan's, thoughts about returning to teaching. In her case, rather than continue to face rejection by the political- based power structure of her district, she is contemplating teaching at the post-secondary level. Susan's sense of self has been badly bruised by the organization and it is only her sense of mission, being there for the children, which keeps her in her assistant principal's position.

Three of the other participants most typify the third category suggested by Marshall (1985), the ability to "pass" in the organization. Sally, Helen, and Bev exemplify "passing" by attempting to find the balance between their professional and feminine identities, working harder, and playing whatever games may be necessary to reach their goal of higher administration. They "read" the organization very well, though Sally and Helen are better able to "work" it than is Bev. Yet, they are intent on preparing themselves to meet organizational conditions for advancement. They all have faith that they will be able to make constructive changes in the organization once they "make it."

Though "passing ," these women maintain strong internal standards with commitment to the "way it should be," promoting a more child-centered educational program in their schools. The problem, however, is that in their working the organization, playing the political games, and accommodating those in power, the "good ole boy" status quo is perpetuated. Without challenge, those who are in power will continue to make decisions under the same tired, traditional terms.

Though sincere in their intent to bring about change, those retreating from the administrative arena and those relinquishing their aspirations, as well as those few "passing," will find it difficult to carve out a niche from which to alter the established culture and move the organization toward change. As the female superintendent who was interviewed for data verification reflected, it is not only "extremely difficult" for a female to "break into" higher level administration, but it is then "extremely difficult" for a female "to relate to or become a part of the culture of most of the school systems." She explained that the cabinet and higher levels of administration are usually made up of "very veteran male educators whose direction and perspectives may be entirely different" from those of a female.

Implications for Practice

Organizational cultures are products of people's attitudes toward their work. They are the product of the individuals' psychological contracts with the organization (James & Jones, 1974). Organizational leaders

must realize that greater achievement of organizational goals necessitates a greater congruence between organizational roles and expectations and individual personalities and work needs. When the individual perceives a "fit" between her epistemological position and the organization, she feels more equipped to aspire to higher level positions, strive toward higher achievement levels, and often is considered by the organization for advancement (Heilman, 1983).

Thus, if women are to stand on equal professional footing with males in educational administration, a new organizational paradigm must emerge. Alternative voices, experiences, backgrounds, and histories must be acknowledged as valid. Each and every individual must be considered valuable to the organization. Compassion, respect, generosity, and connectedness must be the norm.

Organizational Responsibility

The educational organization which does not offer its members validation, feelings of inclusion, and authenticity is depriving not only the individual, but also the organization, of its potential. As Bandura (1986) reminded, positive feeling can result in not only psychological well-being but in greater achievement of organizational goals as well. If complex and difficult educational challenges are to be addressed it must be with contributions from all members of the organization. In permitting the status quo to endure, the organization is not only perpetuating elitism and covert sexism, it is silencing the voices of those who, as advocates of children, might assume a greater responsibility for educational policy and decision-making.

As a result of this study, it is suggested that organizations become more cognizant of their effect on the individual personality. As Schein (1992) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) have prompted, organizational leaders must become "learners" for constructive change to occur within the culture. They must become students not only of organizational theory and practice, but also of people, regularly using "other people's good ideas to grow."

Therefore, it becomes the charge of the educational leaders to stimulate professional conscience to confront disparity and exclusivity within the organization. Those in more secure positions need to disassociate themselves from the prevailing paternalistic culture and begin speaking out, acting out, and encouraging new ways of engaging in the business of schooling. Modeling collaboration, offering career and intellectual guidance, building friendships, diffusing power and disseminating information among all members of the school community must be their mission.

Furthermore, as McCall (1995) pointed out that "in striving to build a more democratic, egalitarian school structure in which caring for all people within the school community can thrive, the possibilities for change exist within collective action" (p. 191). Therefore, educational leaders need to cultivate what Belenky et al. (1986) referred to as an educational culture based on connectedness among participants., where alienation, repression, and division are replaced with community, shared power, and inclusion, where both minds and spirits are developed. To make this reality, organizational leaders need to listen, accept, and appreciate the contributions of each other. With care for the person, and an understanding of human development a the core in interaction, members of the educational community need to respect and encourage authentic voice- that which is original and meaningful- rather than that which is produced in a relentless effort to please authority or attain promotion.

Women in Support of Women

Women themselves can become the greatest proponents of an alternative leadership paradigm. They can

take on a dichotomous "oppositional consciousness" (Moglen, 1983, p. 131) where they oppose the very same culture they exist within. Women can effect change in the culture by establishing coalitions among themselves and trusted others and by capitalizing on their increasing conspicuousness. Together, women might heed the advice of a participant quoted in Aisenberg and Harrington (1988): "Be loud and make waves and do what you want and be free" (p. 18).

Graduate Leadership Preparation Programming

Our graduate educational leadership programs must also revisit their curricula and their programming. Given the fact that an overwhelming majority of educational administration faculty continue to profess a traditional male leadership orientation, present graduate programs do not always prepare leaders who value diversity and appreciate an alternative leadership paradigm. The findings of this research suggest several considerations for those who are in positions to affect changes in graduate schools:

1. Include more contemporary leadership theory into the program of study. Though basic to the understanding of contemporary theory, traditional theory, alone, does not provide for other than the traditional white, male perspective. Attention those theorists and researchers, such as those advocating transformational and relational leadership (Giroux, Bolman and Deal, Sergiovanni, Starratt, Regan and Brooks, Hargreaves, Helgeson, Mulkeen) would balance the programming with a multitude of perspectives.

2. Encourage course work in organizational psychology and culture. Attention to such topics are often relegated to elective status and not actively promoted to the graduate leadership student. Without a psychological understanding of the organization the developing leaders is disadvantaged when attempting to bring about change.

3. Require reading and evaluation of research done in the feminist perspective and in a variety of methods of inquiry. The study of positivistic inquiry still dominates research course work. Discourse which expresses value for various forms of inquiry, and realizes their appropriateness dependent upon the questions being asked, would prepare developing leaders by exposing them to alternative voices, practices, and epistemologies, and a more critical perspective.

4. Develop joint leadership programming which includes not only preparation for the traditional administrative roles but also includes preparation of teacher leaders who would assume active leadership roles and responsibilities within the schools of the future.

Conclusion

Admittedly, this study is contextually tied to existing traditional hierarchical organizations where power is defined by placement on the organizational chart and influence is measured by the ability to have impact on others with decisions which reach far and deep into organization. The women of this study recognized the reality of the present hierarchical definitions of power. They were fully aware that they would possess greater organizational power the higher up the ladder they were able to climb. Nonetheless, they knew, without exception, that they were their own persons and were exhibiting leadership in their own ways. They capitalized on their present positions, exhibited their own dispositions toward leadership, and influenced their work environments. Sally let teachers with whom she worked know that she was "with

them every step of the way." Helen envisioned different and better ways of practicing administration which would allow time for that which is most important, the children and their educational program. Holly summarized it all: "If I really want to do something I will do it! I have the power over my career." Sense of mission, collaboration, support of others, achievement, and internal strength: though working within the constraints of traditional hierarchical organizations, these women were not without personal power.

For all people, self-confirmation and a supportive community are requisites for growth and development, success, and professional progress. Thus, the goal of an organization must be to cultivate not only the intellectual and practical competence but also the affective dispositions including the moral, social, emotional, and esthetic aspects of the personality. Doing so would help to develop within all members of the organization the competencies, self-worth, and efficacy which would permit them to overcome earlier socialized dependencies and ideas of conformity. Where collaboration replaces competition, where community replaces isolation, where respect replaces distrust, and where there is room for all voices, traditional and alternative, there will exist the opportunity for all to be accepted, appreciated, and recognized for the contributions they bring to the organization. The organization and each individual within it can only enriched and energized as a result.

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Dr. Catherine Eggleston Hackney is an Assistant Professor in the Departament of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University., Kent, Ohio.

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